Love That Refuses to Let Go

(Matthew 5:38-48)

In the Beatitudes, Jesus blesses the poor in spirit, the merciful, the peacemakers, and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. He paints a picture of a kingdom where the world's usual measures of power and success are turned upside down. And then, in yesterday's Gospel reading, Jesus takes that vision one step further. He shows us what such a kingdom looks like when it meets the difficult realities of everyday life.

> *"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."*

These are not easy words. Yet with these words, Jesus is inviting us into a love that is deeper than our grievances, wider than our differences, and stronger than the wounds we carry. Forgiveness does not mean pretending that hurt never happened or that injustice does not matter. It means refusing to let bitterness have the final word. It means choosing not to answer darkness with more darkness but allowing the light of Christ to find its way into even the most broken places of our lives.

God's love is like the sunlight that falls upon the earth without first asking whether the ground deserves its warmth. It shines on the good and the bad, the grateful and the ungrateful, the friend and the stranger alike. This is the extravagant, undeserved grace that Jesus invites us to embody.

Perhaps this is what it means to be "perfect" in love: not flawless, not without struggle, but whole-hearted in extending the mercy we ourselves have received. To let love have the last word. To leave room for forgiveness. To see even those who stand against us as people held within God's embrace.

And so, as we seek to live out our baptismal calling, *in the city for good*, may our lives become small reflections of that boundless love: a kindness where there is hostility, a hand extended where there is division, a willingness to forgive where resentment has taken root.

For the love of Christ is not a love that draws boundaries around whom it will embrace. It is a love that keeps making room, keeps reaching out, and keeps calling us into the beautiful, difficult, life-giving work of being God's love.

Peace and Love,
Pastor Doug

